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### Letter, Virginia Brainard to Dudley and Merl Brainard [May 4, 1941]

Virginia Brainard

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May 4, 1941

Dear Mother and Daddy,

This is coming special again 'cause guess why? My money's gone again. I tried to hold out for another week but I've been on the relief rolls for a week already so I guess I'll have to break down and let out an S.O.S. My roommate just went down - stairs to buy us some breakfast--an orange and a candy bar or vice versa. I'm laid up with that darn foot again. Those warts still aren't cleared up and I've been going over to my doctor twice a week since January! But heavens--I've had those things for nearly five years and they're pretty deep. And they're still not cleared up so I thought something drastic had to be done. I've got to get rid of them before I come home because I can't keep running down to Dr. Goehrs twice a week and having it cost us three bucks a visit. So Dr. Schanke and I got ambitious again and I let him put some bichloroacetic acid- on my foot and I can no longer walk.

Friday night was the Ward formal and it was keen. I wore my yellow formal with two skirts under it--a heavy crinoline skirt and ~~my~~ own slip which I starched heavily. My formal looked just like an old-fashioned hoop skirt. Hazel and Edward were chaperones and so, altho' ~~ixwas~~ my date was host, I took him over and we talked ~~xxxxxx~~ them for awhile. You should see Edward dance! He covers that dance floor is nothing flat! He talks loooong steps and glides and dips and sways---its really wonderful! They have so much fun. I had a pretty nice date that evening--Bob Norland. Yep, a Norweigan and a transfer from St. Olaf. His dad is a superintendent of schools north of Mason City. He's tall and blong and very handsome--especially in his white evening jacket. Mmmmmmm--the way the men around here dress for formals! Tuxes, tails, red carnations for a tux, white for tails----white dinner jackets for summer and spring affairs with very deep maroon ties and carnations to march.

Nope, I'm not worrying about getting married for a long, long time. By the looks of things, that isn't going to happen to me for quite awhile. Maybe its just as well because it saves me alot of worry and periodic unhappiness, judging from the ups and downs of some of my friends. I haven't even had a crush on anyone all year and I've certainly dated a variety of men--22 different fellows this year to be exact. But this spring quarter has been different. Friday night was the first date I'd had for a week ~~xxxx~~. And I turned down two ~~xxx~~ other bids to that formal before I accepted Bob. The week-end before I turned down four dates and didn't go out at all. The week-end before that I had four dates but they were the first in the three weeks since the beginning of the new quarter. I've turned down I don't know how many future dates. I don't know why or what I'm holding out for but I don't want to go out with some of these fellows anymore so I just don't---good enough reason. Maybe I'm cutting off my nose to spite my face but there's only a month left and next fall I can start all over again.



I've got some big news to tell you. Last Tuesday Dorothy and I filled out applications for summer jobs ~~with~~ and filed them with Mrs. Sather, asst. dean. And the very next day, Wed., we received a call to come over and be interviewed. I applied for a job as a counselor at a summer camp and I talked to Miss Jane Garwood who heads a big Campfire Camp near Cedar Rapids. She seemed much impressed by my experience and the fact that I've not only been a Campfire girl but am also a Torchbearer. She wanted someone to head Handcraft but I'm not that good. She was also looking for an assistant to the older girls and someone to handle camp publicity with the Cedar Rapids newspapers. I was pretty sure of myself because I can teach anything they have there except horseback riding and I've been a campfire girl and an assistant guardian and everything else. But then, she interviewed just stacks of girls and did suggest that maybe I was too young.

However, Saturday morning I had a letter offering me the job and asking for an answer the first of the week. I've been thinking about it. Its grand experience and ~~and~~ a good chance to get alot of experience doing publicity work and the Cedar Rapids papers are good. Its a six weeks camp--June 16 to July 30. She said she was much impressed by my Campfire experience and was also interested in my experience of organizing a camp newspaper. But I wouldn't be able to come home for three months without alot of extra expense and I'm getting homesick. Also, they already have a girl who has been handling the publicity work and I'm afraid I'd be hardly even a stooge. I don't have any way of knowing how much of that work I could actually get my hands into without walking away with part of someone else's job and I can't tell how much of that work she'd really let me do and how much she was just offering as an added inducement to take the position. The newspaper work would be only a sideline beside my real work as a counselor. Then, too---and this is the biggest drawback---they don't pay a thing (few of those camps do) and I don't ~~km~~ think we could afford a job like that. There would be train fare to Cedar Rapids and then home and if Daddy didn't come down I'd have to do something with my clothes and myself until June 16. Going and coming back would be too expensive. Its really a good opportunity and very good experience but I just don't think its at all practical. I can't afford to work like that for no money. So I guess I'll tell her its just become necessary for me to go to summer school.

I'm getting pretty homesick and its getting pretty near the end. Final exams are over Friday, June 6 and there's nothing I want to stick around for. Commencement is the following Monday but no one stays for that except the seniors! Why don't Conny come along--or El? Heaven only knows where I'll put all my things! I'd like to have Dorothy visit me this summer if that would be possible. Her dad is a railroad official and she travels on a pass so I'd love to have her spend a week with me. How about it?

We'll just forget about the formal for this season because I don't think I'll need it. It just wouldn't be practical to invest in one now. Its pretty hot weather down here now and I ~~have~~ haven't anything to wear in it except my winter skirts and blouses and my one silk dress for dates---if I take any more! I don't know what to suggest because I won't buy clothes here. I can get down to Des Moines



I can get down to Des Moines. I wish I could get one or two cotton dresses. It's just about too late for my suits now--too hot. And I'd like a pair of slacks, picnics being popular around here. But I'm afraid there isn't any money. I won't buy my clothes here so maybe it would be less expensive to see if you can find something in St. Cloud unless I go to Des Moines.

Mrs. Everts and Dorothy's two aunts drove over to see us again today. They brought us two big sacks of pop corns so we can have Sunday supper after all. They have certainly been lovely to us this year and helped look out for us. Ginny's parents are coming for Veishea. That girl gets about two new dresses every week. A new formal and an evening coat and two dresses this week and she insists that she hasn't a thing to wear. She says that she's going to quit taking dates because she hasn't a thing to wear---and her closet's just crammed full of clothes, two and three dresses on each hanger!

Veishea comes to Iowa State next week beginning Thursday. I'm working as a Veishea hostess, on the Tech. Journalism Open House and our own dorm float. I'm still writing society for the Student, too. I'll be glad when it's all over, tho'. It's going to be a lot of fun but a lot of work, too. I'm not so thrilled about the whole thing but I'm too busy to think ahead.

I don't want to go to summer school this year. I know it's the best and wisest thing to do but I'm so tired and sick of school I could ~~xxxx~~ scream! I've gone to school twenty-one months without a break and all it's become is one deadly round of classes, study and lecture, exams. I need a change and I want a job, but at home, if possible. Dr. Schanke told me it would be much better for me if I didn't go to school this summer. He says I've had enough and I need rest. Well, I don't want to lie around all summer and please let me stay in town. I want to write. I've got some ideas and I want to develop them. I'd like to get a job doing some journalism work because I've got to do a lot of practicing and get me a lot of experience for next year.

I was so glad to have you write me about the war, Daddy, and also about marriage. I'm looking forward to our long drive home when we can talk over everything much better than through letters. When will you drive down to get me? Can Mother come too? As soon as the final exam schedule is out, I'll know if I'll be before Friday, June 6, or not.

I didn't know we had a pressure cooker, Mother. They're a little involved to use but not as dangerous as I thought. We are studying refrigeration now. Did you know that it costs more to make ice cubes and sherberts and ices and other desserts having a high water content than it does to freeze ice creams and other desserts made with cream? It's the ~~high~~ water content that makes the difference. And our system of keeping the door open and putting everything away at once isn't good economy the way we thought. Actually, the current consumption is less when the door is opened for a few seconds even tho' frequently than it is when the door is kept open at longer intervals. It's a fact.

I hope I can do quite a bit of sewing this summer. I do hope that everything goes well with Uncle Francis and that that job in Calif. will work out. He should get as far away from this part of the country as possible.

I must stop now so good bye.

P.S. Mom, be sure those nylons are ~~xx~~ long enough.

Love,

*Virginia*